

grade class was the first to benefit from the curriculum change that calls for kindergarteners through third graders to spend two hours each day on literacy.

Mr. Bennett has demonstrated an unwavering belief in the youth of Minneapolis and Crystal as evidenced by his willingness to think outside the box in order to achieve the best possible results for his students. It is Mr. Bennett's commitment to his students and the program that he helped develop that has resulted in him being selected as the state's middle school principal of the year. Kevin Bennett should serve as an example to us all to find ways to serve and improve our own communities.

I truly appreciate all that Mr. Bennett has done and continues to do for the youth of Minneapolis and Crystal, and I thank him for his dedication and service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOIS CAPPS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be present for the following rollcall vote on November 13, 2012 and would like the RECORD to reflect that I would have voted as follows: rollcall No. 604, "yes."

IN RECOGNITION OF THE HEROIC EFFORTS MADE BY THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

HON. ROBERT E. ANDREWS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Mr. ANDREWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the heroic response efforts made by the men and women of the American Red Cross. The destruction caused by Superstorm Sandy devastated those living along the Atlantic coast. During this state of emergency, many lost basic utilities like electricity and heat, access to food and water, and a safe shelter. The impact of the storm is still felt by many residents as they return home and attempt to regain some semblance of their normal life.

For over 130 years, the American Red Cross has served as an independent international humanitarian organization. Simply put, the members of the Red Cross are first responders, who in the wake of emergency, voluntarily enter dangerous environments so that the risk to others may be lessened. Before Sandy made landfall, the Red Cross opened shelters, stockpiled supplies, and organized workers. More than 3,800 Red Cross disaster workers are currently assisting in the relief effort. Since the storm hit, thousands of people have found shelter and over 200,000 meals and snacks have been served. West Deptford

High School, in my home district, transformed overnight from a school into a place of refuge, with beds, a children's playroom, and an adult recreational hall.

The true value of these gallant workers extends far beyond the tangible goods and services they provide. Above all, it is their palpable presence, their reassuring smile and words of kindness—being the crutch which props up those who are ready to collapse. As their mission so eloquently and accurately states, the American Red Cross "prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies." Please join me in honoring these tireless workers and remember that while the Red Cross prides itself on being a nonpartisan and independent organization, it also relies on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to perform its mission.

RECOGNIZING ROYAL J. STARK

HON. JOE COURTNEY

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, last week, Connecticut Legal Services, CLS, recognized an outstanding attorney, Royal J. Stark, for 35 extraordinary years of service. It is with great enthusiasm that I join with his colleagues in congratulating and thanking him for decades of his hard work, here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives.

CLS's mission is to assist those with the greatest need on legal cases ranging from health care to education to housing. Without CLS, thousands of Connecticut citizens over the years would have been rendered homeless or deprived of critical health care and public education. During his tenure, Royal has been a leader at CLS helping the most vulnerable obtain justice and restore dignity across the state while working at its Rockville, Waterbury, and New London offices. Today, he works at the Willimantic office in the heart of my district and focuses on serving individuals with disabilities. At the same time he had a full workload, Royal also helped shape state probate law reforms and clinical teaching at the Quinnipiac University School of Law and the University of Connecticut School of Law.

Mr. Speaker, I have known Royal for over 25 years as a friend and colleague and can personally attest to his commitment to justice, his highly ethical character, and to his understanding of hard work. Royal has made Connecticut a better and more just state, and I would like to thank him for his decades of service.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district and

missed the vote on Tuesday, November 13, 2012. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall No. 604, H.R. 6371 the "Streamlining Claims Processing for Federal Contractor Employees Act."

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$16,248,293,041,003.50. We've added \$5,621,415,992,090.42 to our debt in 3 years. This is \$5 trillion in debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

HONORING DAVID DOMINICK COSTANZO

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2012

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize David Dominick Costanzo. David is a very special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 271, and earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

David has been very active with his troop, participating in many scout activities. Over the many years David has been involved with scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community. Most notably, David has become a member of the Order of the Arrow and joined the Tribe of Mic-O-Say. David has also contributed to his community through his Eagle Scout project. David renovated his council ring at Gashland United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Missouri, by removing weeds and overgrown vegetation, laying down weed fabric and overlaid it all with ornamental gravel.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending David Dominick Costanzo for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.